



Early Childhood Partners

Connecticut Early Childhood Comprehensive System

UPDATE

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Legislative Forum and Full-Day Training on Medical Home: The Standard of Practice for Children with Special Health Care Needs

Dr. Richard Roberts, Director of the Early Intervention Research Institute and Professor of Psychology at Utah State University presented new and persuasive research on the value of Medical Home in a forum held at the Legislative Office Building on March 9, 2005. The forum followed Connecticut's first Medical Home Academy, sponsored by the Department of Public Health and the Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut, held March 8th.

Despite a blizzard that hit the state night before, more than 30 legislators, representatives from state agencies, health care professionals, and parents attended.



In a presentation entitled, "Medical Homes: The Standard of Practice for Children with Special Health Care Needs," Dr. Roberts showed that a medical home system of care is better for children and overwhelmingly favored by parents, because medical data is assembled in one place, making it readily accessible to physicians and parents.

Parent Satisfaction with Medical Home

- **Care delivery was easier**
 - Same nurse to talk to (68%)
 - Getting letters of medical necessity (67%)
 - Getting resources (60%)
 - Getting telephone calls referred (61%)
 - Quick medical care when child is sick (61%)
 - Getting referrals to specialists (58%)
 - Understanding child's medical conditions (56%)
 - Setting goals for the child (52%)
- **Fewer hospitalizations and emergency episodes**
- **Decrease in parent days missed from work**

Participants agreed that traditional fragmented health care services for children are not only expensive and inefficient, but also dangerous. A coordinated care approach is particularly important for Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) because they often have multiple health care problems that require on-going care.

Although the presentation focused on CSHCN, Dr. Roberts and the participants agreed that a medical home approach is the right system for **ALL** children.

Several participants stressed that as the state develops plans for a comprehensive system that integrates services and programs for children, medical home should be a major component of that plan.

Dr. Roberts' research showed that among the main CSHCN goals; an organized system, easy transitions, early continuous screening, adequate insurance, and families as partners; medical home is one of the top priorities.

The importance of involving parents throughout the planning process was emphasized. Mothers at the forum described their difficulties trying to negotiate the existing fragmented system of care.



Sherry McCravey, parent of a child with disabilities

Goals of a System of Health Care

- Families are partners and satisfied
- Access to medical home
- Early and continuous screening
- Access to affordable insurance
- Community-based service system
- Transition to adult life

A health care professional described the bureaucratic hurdles blocking a family from traveling together to a doctor's appointment.



Blyse Soby and Linda Raitt, nurses who work for DCF

For a community based medical home initiative to succeed in Connecticut, Dr. Roberts listed the necessary ingredients: a multi-agency task force with strong parent representation, working relationships and trust among task force members, community awareness, leadership, decision making power, a joint mission statement, an action plan, and a participatory evaluation process.

Necessary Ingredients for Successful Community based Initiatives

1. A multi-agency task force
 2. Family representation
 3. Working relationships and trust among task force members
 4. Community awareness
 5. Leadership
 6. Decision making power
 7. Joint mission statement
 8. An action plan
- Participatory evaluation process



Ann Dandrow, UConn



Mary Eberle, UConn, Liz Brown, COC

The forum was sponsored by the University of Connecticut, A.J. Pappanikou Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Education, Research and Service; Department of Public Health; the Connecticut Commission on Children; and Connecticut Health & Development Institute of Connecticut. The legislative sponsors were Senator Toni Harp and Representative Lenny Winkler.



Ardell Wilson



Deputy Commissioner Norma Gyle



Connecticut Commission on Children

